BAd 405 - POSSIBLE RESEARCH PROJECTS AND TOPICS

Choose one of the topics listed below, or any other topic of your choice. As stated earlier, your topic must be approved by me before you start working on it. Note that topics cannot be duplicated. Those listed below will be assigned/approved on a "first come, first served" basis. Develop appropriate visuals (e.g. PowerPoint, in this case) to aid your oral presentation.

**IT/MIS Salary Review** - This may be a great project for some of you who are planning to enter the IT/MIS field. Research salaries of IT/MIS professionals at various levels (e.g., senior analysts) and for various job types (e.g., Java programmer vs. database designer). Also, compare these salaries offerings to those in other areas such as finance and marketing.

**Functional Perspectives** - The text tries to provide perspectives of the use of technology by industry (e.g., financial services and transportation). Build a portfolio of business stories relating to functional business areas - marketing, finance, human resource management, and operations management. For example, you could build a portfolio of business stories that chronicle the use of databases in various functional areas. Or, you could build a broad spectrum of IT-related stories for just one functional business area.

**New Emerging Technologies** - Emerging technologies by their very nature are changing daily. Some are becoming more widespread; others are just now surfacing. Review technical literature and develop a list of the newest emerging technologies that we may see in our personal and business lives over the next several years.

**Systems Development Successes and Failures** - For some of you planning to enter the IT/MIS field, this may be a great research project. In almost every issue of computer-related journals, you can read about the systems development successes and failures of many businesses. As you review these, develop a list of do's and dont's for use in systems development.

**Electronic Commerce on the Internet** - This is a huge area right now and will continue to be for several years. The authors’ Real HOT Electronic Commerce projects primarily focused on introducing students to electronic commerce as consumers. You can extend that to include a variety of issues related to being electronic commerce providers on the Internet.

**Building a Database for a Local Business** - This is another great hands-on project. Find a local business (preferably small) and proceed through the steps of building a database for that business. Be sure to follow the steps of normalization and perform E-R diagramming correctly.

**Information Security** - As we proceed through the information age and enter the electronic age, a key concern on everyone’s mind is that of information security. Here, you can research issues ranging from secure credit card transactions over the Internet to the legal aspects of organizations selling information about their customers.

**Design Techniques for Building Web Pages** - "Web Pages that Suck" is both a great Web site and book for discussing how people build bad Web pages. Conversely, you can research and compile a list of good design techniques for building Web pages. You will definitely find a wealth of books and Web sites devoted to the topic.

**Enterprise Software** - In Appendix G and on the authors’ Web site, they introduce students to enterprise software, which seems to be growing in strength and destined to become a viable systems development platform. You can research providers of enterprise software and their products including JD Edwards, Baan, Magic, Oracle, and SAP. This is another good project for students planning on a career in IT/MIS.
Outsourcing - Outsourcing goes way beyond simply hiring another firm to perform your work. The seemingly simple steps of preparing an RFP, evaluating RFP returns, and negotiating a contract are full of intricate steps and subtle wording. Additionally, most organizations today see outsourcing as a strategic step that will move them toward their long-term goals. Researching the hard-core how's and why's of outsourcing is a great project that you may like to undertake.

Developing Multimedia Applications - The development of multimedia applications differs dramatically from the traditional systems development life cycle. Most notably, users need more control over a multimedia application and multimedia encompasses the simultaneous (not sequential) presentation of information in several media formats. These and others are great issues to research.

The Redistribution of Information Providers in Your Home - Daily, some information provider is acquiring another (e.g., AT&T's acquisition of cable-giant TCI). These redistributions of how information will invade our homes will have a great impact on our personal lives. Now, in some areas of the country, you can use the same provider for Internet access, television programming, and telephone long-distance service. Predictions of how all this will shake-out may be of great interest to some of you.

The New Flattened, Decentralized Organization Architecture - Over the past 10 years, the traditional organizational structure has undergone significant change, through flattening, decentralization, and becoming global (just to name a few). Many of these changes have only been possible because of IT. For those of you who take a much more overall interest in organizations and the use of non-specific technologies, this is a great research area.

Data Warehouses and Data Mining - Data warehouses (and their associated data mining tools) are still emerging technologies but their acceptance and widespread use is growing everyday. These technology tools now allow organizations to sift through volumes of information without sacrificing the performance of production databases. A good review of data warehouse packages and some business success stories will provide much insight for some of you into this great technology.

The Technology-Based Home of Tomorrow - This is really a fun project. Visit some model homes and do some reading in the real estate industry for technologies that are now pervading new homes. These include voice-controlled lighting systems, intelligent home appliances, and even temperature-controlled automatic driveway heaters.

Viruses and Antivirus Software - Computer viruses are not going away. Daily, at least 10 new viruses are developed by shady individuals with nothing better to do. Research this "dark" world to determine who's developing viruses, why, and how computer-providing organizations are combating those pesky viruses.

The Coming of Virtual Reality - Virtual reality promises to forever change how we interact with IT. Even now, researchers are developing virtual reality systems that incorporate the senses of taste and smell. Exploring this emerging technology will definitely be of interest to some of you.

The Coming of Electronic Cash and Smart Cards - Folding cash and coin currency may be on its way out because of the growing use of such emerging technologies as electronic cash (on the Internet) and smart cards. Explore these types of technologies and determine their barriers to widespread use. Also speculate when we will see these technologies in our everyday lives.

Gathering Intelligence through Competitive Scanning - Competitive scanning is big business today. Knowing what your competitors know and are doing is a key business initiative. Many people are paid just to perform the competitive scanning process. You will find this to be an exciting topic that often touches on "cloak-and-dagger" practices.

Disaster Recovery Planning - Many organizations today would absolutely go out of business if they lost their IT systems for any considerable length of time (often just a few days). So, developing
disaster recovery plans is vitally important. You might also explore what disaster really means to
cybercorps on the Internet (many could go out of business in a matter of hours).

**Ergonomics** - Technology, in spite of the fact that it mostly automates brain-oriented processes,
affects us in a very real way physically. Research the topic of ergonomics. As you do, provide
statistics concerning the loss of work time due to computer injury and develop a list of do's and don’ts
for physically interacting with a computer.

**Managing the Telecommuting Revolution** - Telecommuting is here to stay. As organizations
decentralize and attempt to create closer points of contact with their customers, telecommuters will
become the largest part of our workforce. However, such issues as determining who should be a
telecommuter and how to manage them are key. Research this great topic.

**Distance Learning** - Faculty want to stay at home and teach class; all the while, students dream of
living wherever they want and attending classes across the country (or perhaps the world). Both of
these are becoming viable alternatives to traditional educational processes. Research schools
providing distance learning initiatives as well as providers of distance learning solutions.